CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 47 April 28th, 1959.

DENMARK

Free Churches Do Not Want State Subsidies.

A clergyman in the Danish Lutheran National Church has suggested that the Danish free churches should receive subsidies from the State corresponding to those contributed to the Danish Lutheran National Church, and are given the same access to obtain Government loans towards building projects. A prominent free church member is, however, unsympathetic to the idea.

Rev. Orla Møller, Hasseries, who put forward the proposal in an article in the newspaper "Ny Tid", motivates his idea by saying that he thinks it unfair for the National Church to have financial advantages over the free churches. In a democracy it is not enough that everybody is free to believe what he likes, but the various religious groups must also enjoy the same economic freedom. Rev. O. Møller does not go into details, although he does feel that this proposal should apply only to the religious communities recognized by the State, e.g. church communities of a certain stability and order.

One of the prominent members of the Baptist Community, Dr. Johs. Nørgaard, Principal, Tølløse, has replied to this in the "Baptisternes Ugeblad" that free church quarters do not want any State support in as much as they maintain that Church and State, as a matter of principle, must be separated from one another - in accordance with the view that "in places where a church becomes a State Church, or something in that direction, the rule of the State must, sooner or later, be forced to exercise moral pressure on the religious development of the Church because the very nature of the State is authoritarian power". On the other hand, they would find it justified if State support of the Lutheran National Church were abolished through a successive reduction over a reasonable length of time, and feel that in the long run this would be beneficient to the Lutheran National Church.

Although Dr. Nørgaard thus does not want financial aid he does mention a number of spheres where the free churches would like to enjoy the same privileges as the Lutheran National Church, viz. with regard to army chaplains, to the special tax reliefs and allowances of clergymen, to participation in radio and television broadcasts, to a share in the allotment of sites for churches, and to the right of free church teachers to teach Christianity in public schools.

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Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANNSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Ove Egedsvej 1, Aarhus, Denmark

No. 47 April 25th, 1958

DENMARK

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A clergyman in the Danish Lutheran National Church has suggested that the Danish free churches should receive annual grants from the State corresponding to those contributed to the Danish Lutheran National Church, and are given the same amount to outside Government loans towards building projects. A prominent Free church member is, however, unsympathetic to the idea.

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Closer Connection Between Church and Missionary Societies?

In an article in the "Kristeligt Dagblad", Mr. Johs. Aagaard, Secretary of the Danish Missionary Society, has advocated a closer connection between the Lutheran National Church and the missionary societies. These societies began as voluntary institutions within the framework of the Lutheran National Church, and their executive committees are still to-day independent of the Church.

Mr. Aagaard points out the inconsistency of the fact that clergymen, who are to serve under the missionary societies are called by a missionary board which cannot be said to be representative of the whole Danish Church, are ordained by a bishop, but from then on not subjected to his spiritual supervision like other clergymen, but to that of the missionary board which tends to become an inspection. Mr. Aagaard objects in particular to the procedure in certain cases where people have been ordained to serve as clergymen in Africa or Asia against a promise not to do ecclesiastical service in Denmark.

This situation is untenable, he feels, and goes in for a closer connection between the missionary societies and the Church on "an inner ecclesiastical line" while at the same time strengthening the outer ties also.

The article was a reply to a lecture by the Head of the Deaconess Institution, St. Luke's Foundation, the Rev. Johs. Müller, in which he warned against the growing tendency to make the voluntary Christian contribution more "ecclesiastical". He felt that the various institutions and societies had a good position in the Church where they constituted a valuable free element within the framework of the Lutheran National Church, and that the National Church should appreciate these institutions. He expressed his fear that voluntary institutions and societies would lose their characteristics if they were to be more in conformance with the Lutheran National Church.

State Support Dangerous to Christian Social Work?

Rev. Haldor Hald, Chief of the Church Army, who is also President of the Children's Welfare Work in Jutland has raised the question in "Korshaersbladet" whether it will be possible in future to continue the work on a "Christian foundation", as it says in the rules of many institutions, on account of the large Government grants towards welfare work among children in Denmark.

He emphasizes the great importance of State support in making it possible to raise the standard of material equipment in the welfare work started on private initiative, but at the same time it constitutes a danger in the form of restricting the influence of the same private initiative. He refers to the report by a Government Committee, going in for such restrictions on the grounds that in certain cases only 5 % of the running expenses are covered from private sources. "This view does not take into account the large amount of money donated in the shape of buildings and sites", Rev. H. Hald writes, "nor the importance of private contribution in the form of voluntary service".

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The article expresses the desire for an open statement on the question of the right of private institutions to continue the work on Christian lines although receiving State support. This is especially pertinent in the matter of choosing staff members. However efficient they be, staff members who deny the Christian faith and instead do the work only from materialistic, psychological, biological, or similar principles, place the Christian contribution to work among children in a false position in the eyes of those who have placed the means for the work at the disposal of these institutions".

Christian Symbols in Municipal Chapels.

While almost all funerals in the country in Denmark take place in the churches, they take place in the chapels in the municipal graveyards in the towns. In some cases these chapels are not adorned with Christian symbols because it is felt that the municipal authorities should not thus commit themselves to a Christian point of view.

The question has been raised once more in connection with the building of a chapel in a new graveyard being opened in Gentofte, one of the suburban municipalities in Copenhagen. A number of parochial councils have approached the municipal authorities with a request that it may be adorned with a cross or other Christian symbols.

In a leader the "Kristeligt Dagblad" supports this request and refers to the fact that almost everybody wants church assistance at a funeral and that it seems unreasonable to omit Christian symbols in a chapel used at all funerals out of deference to the views of a very small minority who wants a purely "civic" interment.

Bishop John Ammundsen Dead.

Bishop John Ammundsen, former Bishop of Lolland-Falster from 1923-1942, has died, 87 years old.

News in Brief.

- On the initiative of the "Kristeligt Pressebureau" a course for editors of church papers will be held in the autumn in order to help to make church papers a more valuable means of contact between church and parish, both from the point of view of contents and of get-up.

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Christian Symbols in Municipal Offices.

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FINLAND

Proposal for 10 New Congregations in Helsinki (Helsingfors).

The Committee which for some time past has been working on the matter of the division into congregations of the Lutheran National Church in Helsinki (Helsingfors) has now completed its report. It is proposed to divide a number of congregations and abolish some so that there will be 7 new Finnish and 3 new Swedish congregations. The total number of congregations will thus go up to 24. The division is proposed to take place from January 1st, 1961.

"Suurkirkko" (Storkyrkan) to be the New Cathedral of the Capital.

It may now be taken for granted that "Suurkirkko" (Storkyrkan) in Helsinki (Helsingfors) is to be the cathedral of the new Diocese of Helsinki (Helsingfors) in as much as this has been recommended by the Ecclesiastical Board to the Ministry of Education. One of the members of the Board, however, was in favour of making the Church of St. John the cathedral. "Suurkirkko" (Storkyrkan) is beautifully and centrally situated.

With one dissenting vote the Ecclesiastical Board likewise recommended that the office of Bishop of Helsinki (Helsingfors) should be filled by ordinary election so that the Bishop of Tampere (Tammerfors) whose Diocese formerly included the new diocese will not be given the choice of becoming either Bishop of Helsinki (Helsingfors) or Tampere (Tammerfors).

Proposal for Theological Faculty at Oulu (Uleåborg).

In the Finnish Parliament a group of Members have moved that a Bill be introduced about the establishment of a Theological Faculty at Oulu (Uleåborg) in Northern Finland. There is already a Finnish Faculty in Helsinki (Helsingfors) and a Swedish one in Turku (Åbo). The motivation is that the shortage of clergy is very marked in Northern Finland; that it would be far easier for students from Northern Finland to study in their home district rather than in the capital; and that Oulu (Uleåborg) lies in the middle of the centre of two of the great revivalist movements.

Too Few Army Chaplains.

Only 8 of the 20 offices as army chaplains in the Finnish army are filled in the normal way, while 2 are temporarily filled, and 13 ordinary clergymen have agreed to do a certain kind of army chaplain service in addition to their usual work, it appears from the Finnish press.

Ecclesiastical Presentation of Medals in Borgå (Porvoo).

Last month the 150-years' anniversary of the Diet of Borgå (Porvoo) and the 200-years' anniversary of the erection of the House of the Cathedral Chapter were celebrated by a special service in the Cathedral and a festive function at the Chapter House. The President of the Republic, Dr. Urho Kekkonen, the Cabinet and app. 80 Members of Parliament took part in the festivities.

FINLAND

Proposal for 10 New Constituencies in Finland (Helsingfors).

The Committee which for some time past has been working on the matter of the division into constituencies of the Finnish National Diet in Helsingfors (Helsingfors) has now completed its report. It is proposed to divide a number of constituents and districts some so that there will be 7 new Finnish and 3 new Swedish constituencies. The total number of constituents will thus be 40. The division is proposed to take place from January 1st, 1931.

"Suurpirkko" (Storpyrken) to be the New Cathedral of the Diocese of Helsingfors.

It may now be taken for granted that "Suurpirkko" (Storpyrken) in Helsingfors (Helsingfors) is to be the cathedral of the new Diocese of Helsingfors (Helsingfors) in as much as this has been recommended by the Ecclesiastical Board to the Ministry of Education. Dr. Pehkonen, the member of the Board, now was in Rovaniemi to meet the bishop-elect, Dr. John the cathedral. "Suurpirkko" (Storpyrken) is centrally situated.

With one dissenting vote the Ecclesiastical Board also recommended that the office of bishop of Helsingfors (Helsingfors) should be filled by ordinary election as that of Tampere (Tammerfors) whose bishop formerly included the new diocese will be given the choice of becoming either Bishop of Helsingfors (Helsingfors) or Tampere (Tammerfors).

Proposal for Ethnological Society at Oulu (Uleaborg).

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The New Army Chaplains.

Out of the 20 officers as army chaplains in the Finnish army are filled in the normal way, military are temporarily filled, and 12 ordinary clergymen have agreed to do a certain kind of army chaplain service in addition to their normal work. In spring from the Finnish press.

Ecclesiastical Presentation of Medals in Borga (Borgaa).

Last month the 150-Year-Jubilee of the Diocese of Borga (Porvoo) and the 600-Years' Anniversary of the erection of the Borga of the Cathedral Church were celebrated by a special service in the Cathedral and a festive function at the Church of Borga. The President of the Republic, Dr. Ryno Kallinen, the Bishop and Mrs. Ko Mikkola of Parliament took part in the festivity.

In his address in the Chapter House Bishop G.O. Rosenqvist called to mind, how, after the conquest of Finland, the Russian Czar Alexander the First, on this spot gave promises of decisive importanc to the future of the Finnish nation.

Bishop G.O. Rosenqvist presented a medal made for the occasion, depicting the Chapter House on one side and the portrait of Bishop Frans Ludvig Schauman on the other, to the President, the Prime Minister, the President of the Parliament, and the former Bishop Max von Bonsdorff. Bishop Frans Schauman wrote his name in the histor of the Diet by demanding, at the coronation celebrations for the Russian Czar Alexander the Second which the University had arranged in 1856, that a diet, elected by the people, should be allowed to be set up.

Caféteria for Young People Opened by Church Circles in Tampere (Tammerfors).

In Tampere (Tammerfors) two congregations have taken the initiative in opening a caféteria for young people of the town on Saturday evenings in the Näsi congregational home. The idea of young people's cafés is yet new in Finland and this is the first time that the Church takes part in such an enterprise. A few years ago a young people's caféteria was opened in Helsinki (Helsingfors) on the initiative of the municipal council, and also in Tampere (Tammerfors) the original idea was for the municipal council to solve the question but when it looked as if nothing further would come of it the congregations took the matter in their own hands.

The work is led by two of the young people's clergymen, Rev. Erkki Makavaara and Rev. Seppo Posti, and many of the young people in the congregations take an active part in the undertaking by, among other things, serving refreshments from a buffet. The entrance is fre for all interested and the young people may play different games, read newspapers, and such things. The café is open for three hours and there is an hour's entertainment in which light and serious programmes alternate. The programmes also include Christian addresses

Special "Christian" Radio or Television Station Described as Harmful.

"At times the suggestion has been thrown out that a special "Christian" radio or television station ought to be established, but this would be a mistake", says the Editor Osmo Visuri, Secretary in charge of the religious programmes in the Finnish television. "In this way contact would be established only with those with whom one is already in contact through other channels and thus it would only become another step in the direction of Christian isolation. Through the ordinary television programmes we have a possibility of bringing forward the Christian message in such a way that it may reach those not already familiar with it."

Rev. Heikki Kalima, Secretary in charge of religious programmes in the radio, is strongly in favour of the Church making extensive use of films in its work. He has drawn up a plan for the religious film service and says:

"Films are part of our lives in the same natural way as are news papers and busses. Everyone looks at pictures at various occasions and there is no fundamental difference between an ordinary picture and motion pictures. Films may enlarge our store of knowledge, widen

our imagination, and help us to get away from grey humdrum thoughts. It depends upon the Church people themselves in which direction the influence of film production should go. To make films is usually a matter of business and the Church represents a very large, but, so far, not very interested section of the population, and why should one make films for those who do not see them?"

The Church in Contact with the World of Manufacturing.

In the autumn of 1958 the Finnish Congregational Union arranged a course for clergymen at which the structure and problems of industrialized society were gone over. The Union has now published a report on the course under the title of "Tontaiden tuntumassa" (in touch with the world of manufacturing). Among other things, it says in the report:

"God still acts, also under the changed conditions. The support of the Church may be expected in the endeavours which, in connection with the planning of factories and through labour supervision, aim at humanizing labour and creating greater respect for the value of man. Also the Christians must find their places in the groups and organizations working with the problems of labour and society. The congregation calls people to a sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, of the Eucharist, in the law of God, and in prayer. The liturgy constitutes the constant element. The sermon ought to have relation to the topical matters of the day. Also the new time ought to give rise to prayers, expressing the spiritual life of people of our time, and hymns which have relation to modern life. When the Lord's Supper is celebrated its importance as a meal of joy and fellowhsip should be emphasized. The church services should be adapted to time and occasion. We must remember that for some Sunday morning is actually the time of work. Many have their working place far from their homes and congregations and the work of the Church must also be modified to meet such conditions."

ICELAND

Professor Sigurbjørn Einarsson Elected Bishop.

The Lutheran National Church of Iceland has elected its new bishop, Professor Sigurbjørn Einarsson, in succession to Bishop 'Asmundur Gudmundsson who has reached retiring age. Bishop Sigurbjørn Einarsson, Professor in Theology, obtained 69 of the 114 votes at the episcopal election, cast by the clergymen and members of the Theological Faculty. The new Bishop passed his theological degree at Uppsala (Sweden), and for a number of years he has been connected with the Theological Faculty at Reykjavik, first as a lecturer, and later as Professor. He belongs to the section of younger theologians who in connection with the Scandinavian Theology are working for a renewal of Icelandic Church life.

Bishop Einarsson will be consecrated on June 21st.

NORWAY

The Christian Character of the Norwegian School Weakened by the New Education Act.

The two Houses of the Norwegian Parliament have now passed the new Education Act and the majority (Labour) at all points followed the recommendation of the Committee of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs (see CN No. 46). This means that in the objects clause of the Act the provision that "the school should help to give the pupils a Christian and ethical education" has been retained and that the instruction in Christianity should be given "in accordance with the Evangelical Lutheran Confession" as was also the case in the Education Act of 1936. The text-books of religious instruction must be approved by representatives of the theological faculties and the bishops.

According to the new Act clergymen are no longer ex-officio members of school boards, but are only to be invited to the meetings when the subject of religious instruction is on the agenda, and they have no right of vote. The vicar is no longer a natural member of the supervisory committee, either. In the same way the bishops are no longer members of the higher supervisory commission, but the bishop, or the vicar, or another clergyman nominated by the bishop, is entitled to be present at the instruction in Christianity and to give advice with regard to this subject. The parochial councils have lost their right to give their opinion on the text-books used in the teaching of Christianity, and the former rules in the Education Act concerning morning devotions have been omitted, as the majority of the Committee maintain that this matter should be taken up in connection with the drawing up of a new syllabus. According to the new Act, finally, the provision that teachers should belong to the Lutheran National Church applies only to teachers in religious instruction and not, as hitherto, also to school leaders and inspectors who are to supervise the subject. And the general provision in the Old Act that the teacher should "contribute towards the education of the children as Christians" has been left out.

"In the light of the old Act we can count but losses with regard to the subject of Christian instruction and the Christian character of the school", it says in an article in the Christian daily paper 'Vårt Land' in which the Head of the Institute for Christian Upbringing, Bjarne Hareide, evaluates the new Education Act. But at the same time he points out that compared to the first Bill introduced by Government (see CN Nos. 36 and 37) which caused a storm of protests from Church quarters - protests which have been partly complied with, as may be seen - the new Act is far better from a Church point of view."

Growing Interest for the Retreat Movement in Norway.

The Norwegian ecumenical group "Disippelkretsen" (Circle of Disciples) was able at its Easter meeting at the Sandom Retreat House in Garmo to claim that there is a growing interest in the Retreat movement. They are expecting many visitors to the movement's home in Garmo during the Summer holidays, and the Dutchman Pieter Nienwenhuyzen, who has visited Sandom several times, has promised to lead on the building up of other houses which are to be founded this summer.

Contact with the corresponding movements in other countries has strengthened its growth, illustrated by the Easter meeting, at which there was further some suggestion of founding an ecumenical academy in Norway.

Voluntary Church Choir of Young People to Help Worship.

According to the weekly "Vår Kirke" the Sinsen parish congregation in Oslo has introduced a new church choir arrangement. Instead of a small paid church choir, which is usual in the churches of Oslo, a group of voluntary young people have been engaged to lead the singing in church. The congregation has bought blue gowns for them and at the opening of the service they proceed two by two, headed by the clergyman, to the chancel, where they lead the responses and hymns in unison. At the end of the service they go out of church in procession once more together with the minister.

This new arrangement is greatly appreciated by the congregation and, among other things, it has resulted in other young people feeling more inclined to attend church than before. The main purpose, by the way, was just this, to encourage young people to take an active part in and to share in the experiences of the service.

Successful Easter Week Festival in Oslo and Many Mountain Services.

The Easter Week Festival in Oslo was very successful and there were more participants than last year in the many arrangements. Some 3 000 people watched the performance of the liturgical church play "King of Kings" by Finn Jor at Frogner; sight-seeing tours to old and new churches were attended by 500 people and a great number of people took part in the many church services and musical devotions. The Easter Week Festival is intended primarily for the many visitors to the capital. Great numbers of the inhabitants of the town themselves go to the mountains for skiing during the Easter holidays, but the Church also looks after the many mountain visitors. Arrangements were also made this year for a large number of Easter services and other prayer services in hotels, mountain resorts and other places where there were many Easter visitors.

Two Prominent Norwegian Churchmen Dead.

Two well-known figures in the Norwegian Church, Dean Sigurd Fjaer and Dean H.C. Christie, Member of the Storting (Parliament), have died last month.

Dean S. Fjaer was 67 years old and one of the most learned men in the Norwegian Church and respected by all quarters. Since 1946 he has been Dean of Nidaros.

Dean H.C. Christie was 65 years of age. For a number of years he was President of the Norwegian Student Christian Movement and member of the board of the Clergymen's Association. From 1938-1953 he was the editor of the "Norsk Kirkeblad", and since 1950 he has been representative of the Conservative Party in Parliament.

SWEDEN

Archbishop Yngve Brilioth Dead.

Dr. Yngve Brilioth, Archbishop Emeritus of the Church of Sweden, died in Uppsala on the 27th April, at the age of 67. Last year he was compelled, for reasons of ill-health, to relinquish the high office which he had occupied since 1950.

In 1919, at the age of 28, he became lecturer in Church History at Uppsala; in 1925 he was appointed Professor in Åbo (Turku) in Finland; in 1928 he became Dean of Lund Cathedral and Professor of Practical Theology in Lund, and in 1937 was consecrated as Bishop of the Diocese of Växjö. As a young theologian he came into early contact with the ecumenical movement, and played a very important role in its expansion. He was a member of the Executive Committee and the Central Committee, and from 1947 - 1956 had been President of the Faith and Order movement of the World Council of Churches.

His successor, Archbishop Dr. Gunnar Hultgren, has paid the following tribute to his memory:

"Archbishop Brilioth was aware of the need of inner renewal in the Church, and made a pioneering contribution toward the development and deepening of her life of worship. In his ecumenical work he carried out the duties of his heritage in an exemplary fashion.

Yngve Brilioth held the office of Archbishop at a time when our Swedish Church was troubled by considerable inner tensions, which meant additional worries for him. But he maintained his faith in the strength of our Church, and did his utmost to carry out his duties, even when stricken by ill-health. The Church of Sweden salutes Yngve Brilioth's life's-work with the deepest reverence and thankfulness."

Clergymen in the Lutheran National Church Must Marry Divorced Persons.

In Sweden, as in Finland, the law says that clergymen in the Lutheran National Church are obliged to marry divorced people on their request and an attempt at having this rule amended has now been turned down by Parliament.

Two representatives of the Liberal Party had moved that the matter be investigated with the purpose of amending the law, but the proposal was rejected by 168 votes against 22, while 7 refrained from voting.

In the Lower House one of the movers motivated the proposal by stating that the enforced marriage of divorced persons often brought clergymen into qualms of conscience, and he referred to the fact that clergymen in the National Churches of a number of other countries were under no such obligation. He also referred to the fact that the percentage of divorces in Sweden has increased greatly

since the act became operative. It has now gone up to 15% of all marriages, in Stockholm even 32.6%.

Two Social-Democratic Christian Members, the new Dean of Stockholm Åke Zetterberg, and Dean Harald Hellén, went against the proposal. The former felt that, on the contrary, clergymen would come into conflicts of conscience if they themselves were to decide on the cases in which to marry divorcees, and the latter found that it would be cruel to deny divorced people a church marriage.

Church Building Permits Amounting to 55 Mill. Swedish Crowns in 1958.

Last year building permits amounting to 55 mill. Swedish Crowns for church projects were granted in Sweden. Altogether 275 permits were given, 63 of which went to the free churches. The reason for the large number of permits to the Lutheran National Church is that many of them are for the erection of buildings in church yards, mortuaries and the restoration of old churches.

Proposal for the Establishment of 22 New Ecclesiastical Offices in Stockholm.

The Cathedral Chapter of Stockholm has proposed that the number of ecclesiastical offices in the Diocese of Stockholm be increased by 33, 22 of these within the city limits. Besides this it has been suggested to divide 3 parishes in Stockholm and to amalgamate others in the country districts. With regard to the two parishes in the centre of Stockholm, St. Clara's and St. Jacob's, it is suggested that they each have 2 clergymen, in spite of the decrease in the number of inhabitants in the two parishes, because of the great need for pastoral work among the many thousands of people who have their daily work in the city although they live elsewhere.

The proposal is now to be submitted to the opinion of the individual parishes and only after a new debate will it be included in the final proposal for a new regulation of parishes for the whole of the Swedish Lutheran National Church. This regulation will hardly come into force before January 1st, 1962.

Impending Simplification of Rules Regarding Resignation from the Lutheran National Church.

The Swedish Parliament has carried a resolution to request Government to introduce a bill for a simplification of the rules for resignation from the Swedish Lutheran National Church. The resolution was proposed by the Parliamentary Committee on Law questions who has been discussing the various motions concerning this matter.

So far the rule has been that one should apply in person at the vicar's office with a request for resignation from the Lutheran National Church and the Church Assembly last year rejected a bill saying that a resignation could be done in writing alone.

Free church circles in particular have maintained that the present rule is not satisfactory in a country practising religious freedom in other respects, but the debate in Parliament showed that also a number of Lutheran National Church clergymen want an amendment. It has been especially emphasized by free church quarters that when people have called in order to resign their membership in the Lutheran Church, the ministers have tried to persuade them to remain in the Church.

In an article on the subject the weekly "Svensk Kyrkotidning" the Rev. Allan Svantesson writes that it must be both natural and right that a clergyman does not give people who want to resign from the Church the impression that the Church and its servants do not care about them. A minister must be allowed to talk with a member of his congregation about such matters although he should not, of course, try to keep anyone back against his express wish and clear conviction. Rev. Svantesson points out that free church ministers find it natural to speak with members of their communities who wish to withdraw from the community, but then the same privilege must be granted clergymen in the Lutheran National Church. And the argument that one is "born into" the Lutheran National Church, but must join the free churches is no longer an absolute difference as there are now also many being "born into" the free church communities.

Devotional Chapel in the Parliament Building of Sweden.

The Swedish Parliament building in Stockholm is to be restored and according to the plans now drawn up a special room will be set aside and furnished as a small chapel. The Members of Parliament specially interested in Christianity have united across Party divisions in a "Christian Group" of 72 Members.

More Religious Programmes in Swedish Television.

A delegation from the Christian Group in the Swedish Parliament who counts 72 Members from the 4 Democratic Parties, has appealed to the management of the Swedish radio for more room for Christian programmes, particularly in television. The application also expresses the desire for fixed hours of broadcasting, for instance, among other things, for regular evening prayers. Furthermore, the appointment of a special official in charge of the Christian programmes in television is advocated, and, finally, a better sorting out of the film programmes so that they do not act in the direction of looser morals, but, on the contrary, may contribute towards the education and forming of ideals of children and young people.

The Director of broadcasting, Olof Rydbeck, was very positively inclined. He promised to enlarge the Christian influence in television so that there will be an average of one Christian programme a week as from the beginning of the next financial year. He could not promise, however, any fixed hours of broadcasting. For the time being the broadcasting direction has appointed the free church member, Mr. Olof Wennås as part-time "Christian staff member" in television, the Director of broadcasting said and also promised a more careful sorting out of the films to be used in television.

Swedish Ecumenical Book on Underdeveloped Countries.

At the request of the Swedish Ecumenical Council a special committee has been discussing for the past few months a number of problems in connection with the relation between the countries of the West and the Christian Church and the underdeveloped countries. The purpose of this investigation is the publication of a book on the problems which may serve as a guide for Swedes at home as well as for missionaries abroad and for Swedes employed in technical advisory work.

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The work of the committee has been based on the publication of the World Council of Churches on "Rapid Social Change". A number of experts on conditions in the underdeveloped countries, both from the missionary societies, and the technical advisory teams, have taken part in the work as special advisors to the committee. Some of the Christian Members of Parliament have also joined in the work.

From April 10th-12th a conference was held, including various experts, at which the "finishing touches" were applied. In this conference the Professor in Mission History, Professor Bengt Sundkler, and the Lecturers Gunnar Hillerdal and Berndt Gustafsson, took part, among others.

Two Prominent Swedish Churchmen Dead.

The 80 years old former President of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, Dr. Axel Andersson, has died. From 1930-1944 he was the able and respected leader of the Mission Covenant Church, known for his keen sense of justice and vitally concerned with the social and ethical contents of Christianity.

Only 50 years old the Director of the Central Board of the Lutheran National Church, Rev. Hjalmar Brundin, has died. He has been the leader of the much varied activities of the Central Board of the Lutheran National Church since 1957.

Yes or No to Swedish Nuclear Weapons?

Since the Swedish Parliament will soon have to decide on whether or not to introduce tactical nuclear weapons in the Swedish national defence a lively debate on the matter is going on everywhere at the moment.

As a contribution to this debate the Editor, Dr. Erland Sundström, has published a detailed article in the "SvenskVeckotidning" owned by the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, in which he concludes that it will be impossible to maintain Swedish neutrality regardless of whether nuclear weapons are introduced or not if a great power, for one reason or the other, should want to occupy the country. Both for this reason and out of concern for biological life on the earth altogether, he is against the use of tactical nuclear weapons and instead goes in for a building up of a spiritual and ethical resistance front which will be of importance in any situation.

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